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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 71/NO. 22 JUNE 4, 2007

INSIDE

Harry Ring: A communist militant for seven decades

N.Y., L.A. events celebrate life of Socialist Workers Party leader

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Massachusetts workers sue boss for robbing them of overtime pay

Plant raided by 'la migra'

Workers Carlos Simaj Morente and Flor Chah at May 15 press conference in New Bedford, Massachusetts, announcing class-action lawsuit against Michael Bianco Inc.

BY BETSY FARLEY

NEW BEDFORD, Massachusetts, May 21—Six workers here filed a class-action lawsuit last week against Michael Bianco Inc. for cheating current and former employees out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in wages over a three-year period. The plaintiffs are Digna Mendoza, who still works at the factory, and Flor Chach, Elsy Hernandez, Pedro Pacheco, Carlos Simaj Morente, and Gilberto Vieira.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents raided the leather

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U.S. rulers wrangle over new immigration 'reform' bill

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

May 22—Prominent Democratic and Republican senators announced a new immigration bill May 17 that is backed by the White House. But in face of the sharp debate the measure sparked in Congress, and opposition from many employers, congressional leaders quickly abandoned initial plans to speed the bill through the Senate.

Oppose bosses' immigration reform!

— editorial, p. 9

Like earlier proposals, the "Secure Borders, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Reform Act of 2007" is designed to meet the needs of U.S. capitalists: to allow some immigrants to eventually obtain permanent residence while keeping millions in a vulnerable status in order to maintain a permanent pool of superexploited labor.

Democratic senators Edward Kennedy, Diane Feinstein, and others joined Republicans such as John Kyl and John McCain at the press conference announcing the "compromise" bill.

Kennedy said it would "secure our borders and bring millions of people out of the shadows and into the sunshine of America." He hailed the measure's "doubling of border guards, securing our perimeters, increasing the number of inspectors, cracking down on smugglers

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5,000 march in L.A. to protest police riot

Demand legalization of undocumented

Militant/Naomi Craine

Some 5,000 marched in Los Angeles May 17 to MacArthur Park, site of a brutal cop attack on a May Day immigrant rights action. Sign says, "They beat us. They united us!"

BY NAOMI CRAINE

LOS ANGELES, May 17—Some 5,000 people marched down Wilshire Boulevard to MacArthur Park here today in the first street protest since the May Day police riot. Among them were hundreds of workers who were in the park when the cops fired rubber bullets and used clubs to break up a peaceful rally demanding legalization of the undocumented and an end to raids and deportations.

Araceli, who asked to be identified only with her first name, told the *Militant* she came to demand justice. "Not just for me, but for everyone who was hurt on May Day." She described how she was trampled while trying to find her son who had become separated from her in the

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'ICE get out!' protesters in Minneapolis tell 'la migra'

BY JULIAN SANTANA

MINNEAPOLIS, May 20—"Stop the raids and deportations" and "Legalization now!" read many of the signs held by 40 protesters here today. The action was called by the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Coalition to protest a raid of a residential area yesterday by agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and local police.

Many of the demonstrators were students from the University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Community and Technical College. They were joined by workers who were in the area. Many people driving by honked their horns in solidarity.

The protest took place at the corner of Bloomington Ave. and Lake St., the intersection in the heart of the Latino community here where the ICE raid took place. Many working people, mostly from Mexico, come here to shop on weekends.

At noon on Saturday, ICE agents, along with Bureau of Criminal Apprehension cops and Minneapolis police officers, raided a second-story apartment.

As soon as four sport-utility vehicles bearing the federal immigration cops appeared at Lake and Bloomington, dozens of people sprinted south on Bloomington and down nearby alleys screaming, "ICE! ICE!" to warn working people.

A crowd that quickly swelled to 100

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Democrats drop troop pullout dates from war funding

BY SAM MANUEL

May 23—Democrats in Congress have drawn up a new bill to fund the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that drops any reference to dates for redeployment of U.S. troops in Iraq. On May 1, U.S. president George Bush vetoed a $100 billion war funding bill

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Sweden, Finland governments move toward joining NATO

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, May 20—On April 15 Finnish prime minister Matti Vanhanen announced that Finland and Sweden will join NATO's Rapid Response Force this year. A month later—as a precondition to joining that force—the two countries are participating alongside the U.S. and British navies in the largest naval exercise in the Baltic Sea since the end of the Cold War.

The moves register an accelerating shift on the part of the two countries towards joining the U.S.-led transatlantic

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No to NATO entry!

— Communist League statement, p. 9

All out to meet 'Militant' fund and subscription goals

Letter from the editor

Dear Reader,

I invite you to join *Militant* supporters across the United States and other countries in an all-out effort over the next week to make the goals of the paper's spring subscription drive and

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60 Haitian immigrants killed off shores of Turks and Caicos

BY BERNIE SENTER

MIAMI, May 13—A police boat rammed a 30-foot sailboat loaded with 160 Haitian migrants minutes away from the shores of the Turks and Caicos Islands May 4. The patrol boat towed the migrants further out to sea, then abandoned them in shark-infested waters after their vessel capsized.

"Our boat flipped over and they just left us out there," said Dona Daniel, 23, to the Associated Press. Daniel is one of the 78 survivors who were locked up in a detention center and then sent back to Haiti. "We thought they were bringing us to shore, but they took us further out to sea."

Daniel's two brothers drowned. Sixty-one bodies were recovered. More than a dozen are still missing.

Lovderson Nacon, 19, told the Associated Press how the patrol boat ran over people after they were tossed into the water. "The people who knew how to swim lived. The people who didn't drowned."

Other survivors described how police beat them back with clubs as they tried to pull themselves aboard the cop boat.

The Turks and Caicos Islands is a British colony in the Caribbean north of Haiti and east of Cuba.

The *Miami Herald* reported May 11, "Haitian immigrants form an essential low-income work force here, [in the Turks and Caicos] laboring to build luxurious beachfront homes, collect trash and carry suitcases for tourists. Many say allegations in the capsizing underscored their belief that they get treated like second-class citizens compared to locals, known in the Turks and Caicos as 'belongers.'"

AP

A boat that had carried dozens of Haitian migrants is tugged to the coast of Turks and Caicos Islands after capsizing. At least 61 people died May 4 when a police boat rammed the vessel.

The Turk and Caicos government disputed the migrants' accounts. They and the British government are investigating.

'Cuba's socialist revolution ended anti-Chinese discrimination'

Students at Los Angeles college discuss book by Chinese Cuban generals with its editor

BY WENDY LYONS

LOS ANGELES, May 15—About 80 people, including students from several classes, participated in a discussion today at California State University, Los Angeles on *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*. The book is published by Pathfinder Press.

Donald Bray, emeritus professor of political science, chaired the event. He described how he and Marjorie Bray, another professor on campus, took students to Cuba annually as part of a study program until two years ago when the U.S. government put even greater restrictions on travel there.

The Brays sponsored the event, as did Latin American Studies, the Educational Opportunity Program, Department of Pan-African Studies, the Department of Asian and Asian-American Studies, and education professor Stephanie Evans.

The meeting began with a video clip from the documentary *Ancestors in the Americas* describing how Chinese were brought to Cuba in the 19th century as indentured labor. It depicts these workers' participation in the 19th-century fight for Cuba's independence from Spain and in the 1959 Cuban Revolution.

Mary-Alice Waters, the editor of *Our History Is Still Being Written,* then spoke. She said the book is an introduction to the Cuban Revolution. The story of its authors is part of the story of Cuban working people who refused to bow down to the indignities and brutalities of the dictatorship under which they lived.

"When the revolutionary government came to power, most didn't think of it as a socialist revolution," Waters noted. "They wanted a society based on justice and equality." As the Cuban toilers carried out land reform, a literacy drive, and took the resources of their country into their own hands, "they came into a head-on collision with U.S. imperialism, which was determined to return the land and the factories to their former owners. The Cuban people decided to defend what they had won, and that was the beginning of the socialist revolution."

One reason the book is receiving such a warm welcome in the United States and other countries, Waters said, "is the growing struggle for legalization of immigrant workers." She pointed to the May 1 marches and plans for a demonstration here to protest the police riot against the May Day rally at MacArthur Park.

"How are the Chinese preserving their culture in Cuba?" was one of the questions in the discussion period.

"Cubans are proud of their heritage," said Waters. "They say Cuba is one-third Black, one-third European, and one-third Chinese. Their nation was forged from the fight against slavery and indentured servitude. While there has not been a significant migration from China in many generations, there is a revival of interest in Chinese cultural tradition reflected in many Chinese cultural organizations throughout the country. More people are studying Chinese. The deepening trade relations with China are also a factor."

"What percentage of the U.S. embargo against Cuba has to do with what the U.S. government wants and what part has to do with what Cubans living in Miami want?" one student asked.

"The foreign policy of the U.S. government is decided by the ruling class here, not the former ruling class of Cuba," Waters said, referring to Cubans in Miami who fled after the 1959 revolution. "The truth is that organizations like the Cuban-American National Foundation are creatures of Washington. The U.S. government is hostile to Cuba because its people and their revolutionary leadership refuse to back down."

"How did you get involved in editing this book?" asked another student.

"When I was a college student the Cuban Revolution was being born," said Waters. "In response to that revolution and the deepening struggle for civil rights here, I became a socialist. This book helps show what a real revolution is—something made by millions—and what a revolution can accomplish."

"I didn't really know about Cuba," Diana Ramirez, a student, said after the meeting. "Now I want to learn more."

THE MILITANT

'Gives you truth about the real world'

"I like the 'Militant' because it gives you the real truth about the real world we live in."

— Willie Warren
Carlstadt, New Jersey

Willie Warren is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1245.

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The Militant

Vol. 71/No. 22

Closing news date: May 23, 2007

Editor and circulation director: Argiris Malapanis

Washington correspondent: Sam Manuel

Editorial volunteers: Róger Calero, Martín Koppel, Olympia Newton, Paul Pederson, Jacob Perasso, Brian Williams, and Rebecca Williamson.

Published weekly except for one week in January and two weeks in June.
The Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.
Telephone: (212) 244-4899
Fax: (212) 244-4947
E-mail: themilitant@mac.com
Website: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 306 W. 37th Street, 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: United States: for one-year send $35 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year subscription send $65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first class (airmail), send $80.

Africa, Asia, and the Middle East: Send $65 drawn on a U.S. bank to above address.

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United Kingdom: £25 for one year by check or international money order made out to CL London, First Floor, 120 Bethnal Green (Entrance in Brick Lane), London, E2 6DG, England.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Sweden aims to join NATO

Continued from front page
military alliance.

Since World War II, both Finland and Sweden have had a policy of "nonalignment." Both ruling classes used this position in an effort to keep Finland from becoming a "buffer country" of the Soviet Union. The Swedish government maintained an official "neutrality" policy during and after the two world wars. This allowed Swedish capitalism to emerge from the war with its production apparatus intact and then use this image of neutrality to boost its trade in the semicolonial world during the Cold War period.

In 1994 the Swedish government began formal collaboration with NATO. Two years later in Yugoslavia, Swedish troops for the first time were put under NATO command. Today the Swedish and Finnish governments both have troops under NATO command in Kosova and Afghanistan.

Parallel with this, Stockholm began to reorganize its military from one structured around "invasion defense" to what the Swedish government calls a "deployment defense"—to allow the Swedish military to participate more actively in imperialist military interventions abroad.

Over the past decade, the U.S.-led military alliance has expanded to include the Baltic nations of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia—where Sweden has substantial investments. Since the 2003 invasion, Stockholm has been effectively sidelined in Iraq for not joining the "coalition of the willing." These things have put the question of NATO membership for Stockholm more sharply on the table for a growing section of the Swedish ruling class.

The naval exercise "Noble Mariner 2007" began on May 14. It involved 10,000 soldiers and 80 warships. Swedish and Finnish troops and ships participate in order to be certified to join the NATO Response Force.

In preparation, 43 ships and around 7,000 soldiers from 14 countries visited Gothenburg on the west coast of Sweden for a conference in that city. They were met by a demonstration of 3,000 on May 12. It was organized by 30 political and peace organizations. Banners in the march read: "NATO out of Gothenburg"; "Defend Sweden's nonalignment"; "NATO out of Sweden—For peace and nonalignment."

Militant/Catharina Tirsén

Protest May 12 in Gothenburg, Sweden, against hosting of NATO naval forces there on eve of military exercise. Banners read: 'NATO out of Gothenburg' and 'NATO out of Sweden.'

Most organizations presented nationalistic reasons for opposition to the moves by Stockholm towards NATO membership, defending the traditional "neutral" position of the Swedish ruling class.

"We have to stand up for the dignity of our country and defend our nonalignment," said Hans Linde, a member of parliament from the Left Party.

Tove Janzon of the Revolutionary Communist Youth called for Sweden to "form an independent policy and raise its voice against crimes against human rights committed by U.S.A. and NATO."

In contrast the Communist League and the Young Socialists participated with a statement and the demands "No to Swedish membership in NATO and participation in NATO's Response Force. Swedish troops out of Afghanistan, Kosova, Lebanon, and Congo!" (See statement on page 9.)

Protesters in Minnesota and Iceland demand: 'Free Cuban 5! Extradite Posada Carriles!'

BY REBECCA WILLIAMSON

MINNEAPOLIS, May 16—Thirty-five people held a picket line here at rush hour in front of the Federal Building to demand extradition of Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela, where he faces prosecution for his role in organizing the deadly 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner.

On May 8 a U.S. immigration judge decided to drop the immigration charges against the CIA-trained assassin, allowing him to walk free. Protesters also called for defense of Cuba and Venezuela against Washington's hostile policies.

Sonia Aviles, 21, a student at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, joined the picket line with some friends who are mostly from El Salvador. "The U.S. is trying to defend him, and he was responsible for the attack that killed 73 people," she said, referring to the 1976 bombing.

Jesse Steen, 33, a nursing assistant at Walker Methodist Hospital, said that the move by U.S. officials to charge him with immigration violations "is a charade. They never intended to prosecute him. The only way to serve the interest of justice of the people is to extradite him."

❖

BY ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON AND KARL SIGTRYGGSSON

AKRANES, Iceland, April 30—A dozen people attended a meeting here today at the White House, a youth center in this small town just north of Reykjavík, to hear about the international campaign to demand freedom for the Cuban Five.

The five Cubans—Gerardo Hernández, René González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González—were arrested by the FBI in 1998 and convicted three years later on frame-up charges, including "conspiracy to commit espionage." They are serving sentences ranging from 15 years to a double life term. The Five were living in Florida and gathering information on right-wing Cuban-American groups that have a record of carrying out violent attacks on Cuba and operate with impunity in the United States.

The meeting, initiated by the Communist League, was built by young people in this area, including members of the youth of the Socialist Alliance.

Ólöf Andra Proppé, speaking for the Communist League, said it is important to know who the Cuban Five are and what they are defending. Three of the Cuban Five also volunteered, along with hundreds of thousands of other Cubans, to fight alongside the Angolan army to smash the South African apartheid regime's invasions of that country in the 1970s and '80s.

Today, from behind prison walls, the five Cubans continue to defend their country's socialist revolution and to support struggles by working people worldwide.

Protests meet anti-immigrant measures in Georgia

BY JACOB PERASSO

ATLANTA, May 18—Supporters of immigrant rights organized a protest on May 1 here, and spoke out against recent legislation aimed at the rights of undocumented students and workers.

Two local radio station DJ's, Ulises "El Bocho" Ugalde and Jorge Lopez "El Vampiro," organized a human chain May 1 surrounding La Raza radio station here. Hundreds reportedly took part, carrying signs opposing state Senate bills aimed at the rights of immigrant workers.

Students, professors and others have lambasted plans by the Board of Regents of the Georgia state university system to require undocumented college students to pay out-of-state tuition rates beginning July 1.

The hike in tuition bills can be huge. At Georgia Tech and Georgia State University, for example, in-state students pay $1,946 per semester vs. $7,785 for out-of-state students.

A series of four hearings were held May 8–14 by the regents in Dalton, Clarkston, Tifton and Gainesville. The majority of speakers defended the right of undocumented students to pay the same as other in-state students.

"Affordable education is a human right," said Xavier Kim at the May 9 hearing in Clarkston. Kim is a member of Students for Peace from the University of Georgia Athens. "I am an immigrant, I am a Korean, I am an American, I am a human being, and no human being is illegal," he said.

D.A. King, an anti-immigrant rightist, said at the hearing in Dalton, that space in state colleges and universities, and in the waiver program, should be used by legal residents. "All of us wish that we could provide a college education at a reduced rate for everybody on the planet," he said. "We cannot."

Georgia state colleges and universities already require undocumented students to pay out-of-state tuition. But starting July 1, they will no longer be eligible for a limited number of achievement-based waivers that offered in-state rates to some undocumented students who graduated from Georgia high schools.

The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* reported that state officials estimate roughly 100 students may be receiving the waivers statewide.

Shelly Rose, associate director of the Anti-Defamation League, South East Region, spoke at the Clarkson hearing, urging in-state tuition rates for all graduates of Georgia high schools regardless of documentation.

University officials say the policy shift is a result of the agency's interpretation of the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act, which was signed it into law last year.

The state senate has already passed two other laws that would affect many undocumented immigrants. Both await the governor's signature.

Bill 15 would make driving without a license a felony on the fourth offense within a five-year period.

Bill 38 would require Georgians to obtain a valid driver's license before they can get their car registered. To get a driver's license, residents of Georgia must already verify they are in the country legally.

Georgia's undocumented immigrant population—estimated at nearly half a million—is considered one of the country's fastest-growing, according to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

—CALENDAR—

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Rally for Immigrant Rights. Humane Immigration Reform Now! Stop the Raids! Stop Tearing Families Apart! Saturday, June 2, 1 p.m. West Steps of U.S. Capitol building. *Sponsored by the National Capital Immigration Coalition. For more information visit www.ncic-metro.org.*

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ALABAMA

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The Murder of Jimmie Lee Jackson: Alabama State Trooper Indicted in 1965 Alabama Civil Rights Death. Film: *Eyes on the Prize* documentary on 1965 events in civil rights struggle. Speaker: Jeanne Fitzmaurice, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 1, 7:30 p.m. *3029A Bessemer Rd. Tel.:(205) 780-0021.*

FLORIDA

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China and the World Today: A Working-Class Perspective. Speaker: Maggie Trowe, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., June 1. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *8365 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 206. Tel.:(305) 756-4436.*

IOWA

Des Moines

How U.S. Blacks Defeated Legal Segregation: Lessons for the Struggle of Immigrant Workers Today. Speaker: Carlos Samaniego, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., June 2. Dinner, 6:00 p.m.; program, 7:00 p.m. *3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (515) 255-1707.*

London protest demands freedom for Cuban Five

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel.: (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY BJÖRN TIRSÉN

LONDON, May 19—Dozens gathered at Trafalgar Square here today to speak out for the release of five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in U.S. jails. The five were convicted on frame-up charges by Washington that include "conspiracy to commit espionage" for the government of Cuba and "conspiracy to act as an unregistered foreign agent." About 100 people gathered to listen to speakers, who included representatives of the sponsoring groups: The North London Cuba Solidarity Campaign (NLCSC), Rock Around the Blockade, Communist League, and Young Socialists.

"We are here today to demand the release of the Cuban Five," said Alex Xezonakis, a Young Socialist who had attended an April 29–30 international youth conference in Havana on the campaign to free the Cuban revolutionaries. The five—Gerardo Hernández, René González, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, and Fernando González—"were living in Florida collecting information on Cuban American ultrarightist groups with a long history of violent attacks against Cuba carried out from U.S. soil with Washington's complicity," he said. "Their arrests and frame-up are part of the decades-long war waged by U.S. imperialism against the Cuban Revolution."

The British capitalist class, Xezonakis continued, "has a long history of imperialist policy against Cuba. It vehemently opposed the revolutionary course of the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army—which led the struggle to overthrow a brutal, U.S-backed dictatorship in the late 1950s—and has supported every U.S. move against Cuba unless it hurt their profit interests."

"It is a great injustice to the Cuban people," said Cherrelle Richards, 17, a high school student, referring to the imprisonment of the five. It was her first time at a rally.

Juan Carlos, 44, a teacher, said he had come "so that the truth is known and justice can be realized."

Caroline Owen, 27, a town planner, walked by and saw the rally. "I'm surprised I haven't heard about this before," she said. "I'd like to find out more." She bought two copies of the *Militant*. Others passing by had a similar response.

Militant/Björn Tirsén

Young Socialist Alex Xezonakis speaks at London protest for freedom for the Cuban Five

Afterward, some of the protesters walked to Downing Street, the official residence of Prime Minister Anthony Blair. There the NLCSC delivered a letter to Blair calling on his government to "add its voice to this international demand for justice."

Andres Mendoza contributed to this article.

5,000 in L.A. demand justice after cop riot

Continued from front page

crowd. "The cops began pushing people and everyone was running. That's when I fell." Two months pregnant, she went to the hospital later that night where she miscarried.

Oscar, who asked that his last name not be used, marched holding a sign that read: "We came for a immigration reform. We did not come to fight or to be insulted by the authority!" Like many at the protest, he did not support the immigration bill now before the U.S. Senate. "It has so many conditions—learning English, thousands of dollars in fines—that it won't help most people," he said. "You can't even live on minimum wage. How can you pay $5,000?"

"I came to protest because it's important to get immigration reform," said Salvador Franco, an eyewitness to the police violence. "I also want to protest the war in Iraq, which is a war against humanity."

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and State Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez, sought to mute the public outrage at the brutalization of protesters on May 1 by participating in today's march.

Police Chief William Bratton and dozens of cops on bicycles were waiting for the demonstrators to arrive at the park. Hundreds of cops on foot, bicycle, and motorcycle patrolled the 10-block route of the march. A flier distributed by the cops at the rally stated: "The goal is to provide you with an atmosphere that is safe and in harmony with your right to free speech. We appreciate your cooperation in assisting our ability to ensure that you have a positive experience."

Some workers thought otherwise.

The weekend before the demonstration, this correspondent spoke to a worker at MacArthur Park who had suffered a knee injury in the May Day assault. Asked if he planned to join the May 17 protest, he said, "Why? So the cops can beat me some more?"

"We are getting a real lesson in the role of the police," said Gerardo, a member of the Committee of Workers in Resistance who asked that his last name not be used. "They are part of the state, and their job is to control the working class. On March 6, ICE broke into the Michael Bianco factory in New Bedford, Massachusetts, and seized the workers [see front page article]. On May 1, the L.A. cops broke up our demonstration. This is exactly what the dominant class wants them to do."

Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.

Circulate, donate to 'Militant'

Continued from front page

fund appeal.

Involving the maximum number of workers and youth who like the paper, we can surpass the 250 subscriptions needed to hit the circulation drive target and collect the remaining $22,000 required to continue printing the paper weekly through early fall.

Many readers have recently noted they need the *Militant* to get a feel for the multitude of struggles across the United States in which workers are demanding legalization of the undocumented and organizing to defend fellow workers from raids and deportations and protect them from abuse and brutality by the police. Some of what's in the *Militant*, like the chart showing the scope and geographic spread of the May Day actions, can't be found elsewhere. Much of its international coverage—from articles on the reality of Cuba's socialist revolution to new analysis on China and the imperialist wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—is also unique.

To continue, we depend on your generous donations and help in expanding the paper's new and long-term readership.

By next Wednesday, May 30, the *Militant* needs to receive more than twice the $10,200 that came in last week— $22,200 to be exact—to make the $100,000 fund drive goal.

Without regular donations from you, the *Militant* couldn't send reporters abroad—like the team traveling to Havana this week to cover events around the 160th anniversary of the arrival in Cuba of the first Chinese indentured laborers. We couldn't maintain the low introductory subscription rates we offer. We couldn't pay rent, utilities, and other operating costs. Not to speak of the shipping costs, which shot up with the rate increases the U.S. Post Office just instituted.

About 250 more subscriptions are also needed in the last week of the campaign to meet the international goal of 2,400 new readers. Given the response to the paper since May Day, especially among workers, this is within reach.

Renew your sub today, and ask coworkers, fellow students, neighbors, friends, and relatives to sign up too and to kick in some funds! Send in donations now! (See address on page 2.)

Sincerely,
Argiris Malapanis
Editor

Spring 'Militant' Subscription Drive
March 31–May 27 ♦ Week 7 of 8

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London	**75**	**71**	**95%**
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UK Total	**105**	**103**	**98%**
SWEDEN	**35**	**33**	**94%**
AUSTRALIA	**45**	**41**	**91%**
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Newark, NJ*	**130**	**115**	**88%**
San Francisco*	**125**	**110**	**88%**
Miami*	180	155	86%
Twin Cities*	160	136	85%
Boston	85	72	85%
Los Angeles	120	101	84%
Atlanta	115	96	83%
Philadelphia	120	99	83%
Albany, NY	10	8	80%
Des Moines	125	100	80%
New York	320	256	80%
Houston	100	72	72%
Pittsburgh	65	41	63%
Detroit	8	3	38%
U.S. Total	2,128	1802	85%
CANADA	130	107	82%
Int'l totals	**2,515**	**2,151**	**90%**
Goal/Should be	**2,400**	**2,100**	**88%**

* raised quota

$100,000 'Militant' Fund Drive
March 31–May 27 ♦ Week 7 of 8

Country	Quota	Paid	%
SWEDEN	**500**	**536**	**107%**
AUSTRALIA	**1,400**	**1,275**	**91%**
UNITED KINGDOM			
LONDON	**1,500**	**1,400**	**93%**
Edinburgh	400	275	69%
UK total	**1,900**	**1,675**	**88%**
FRANCE	300	260	87%
ICELAND	450	384	85%
NEW ZEALAND	2,800	2,392	85%
UNITED STATES			
Detroit	**65**	**100**	**154%**
Chicago*	**5,700**	**5,420**	**95%**
Des Moines	2,000	1,733	87%
New York*	15,000	12,831	86%
San Francisco*	11,000	9,404	85%
Twin Cities*	5,500	4,674	85%
Newark, NJ*	3,850	3,205	83%
Birmingham, AL	2,500	2,034	81%
Miami*	3,800	2,981	78%
Boston	3,800	2,970	78%
Philadelphia*	4,300	3,270	76%
Atlanta	6,000	4,420	74%
Washington, D.C.	3,000	2,144	71%
San Diego	500	350	70%
Houston	3,000	1,930	64%
Seattle	7,000	4,446	64%
Pittsburgh*	3,800	1,985	52%
Los Angeles	8,000	4,095	51%
Albany, NY	50	20	40%
Other		600	
U.S. total	88,865	68,612	77%
CANADA	3,500	2,662	76%
Intl'l totals	99,415	77,796	78%
Goal/Should be	**100,000**	**87,500**	**88%**

* raised quota

‘New International’ articles published in Greek editions

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS

ATHENS—A meeting here to launch Greek-language editions of “Our Politics Start With the World” and “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun” was attended by 22 people. The May 6 event was organized by the Athens-based publishing house Diethnes Vima.

PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

Both articles by Jack Barnes, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the United States and a member of the editorial board of the *New International* magazine, have been published in issues 12 and 13 of *New International.* They are also available in the French- and Spanish-language editions of the magazine.

The Greek translation of “Our Politics Start With the World” was published in late April. “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun” was published in Greek last year and also contains “Their Transformation and Ours,” an SWP resolution.

The May 6 event was held in the working-class neighborhood of Kato Patissia. Those attending included Palestinian and Syrian immigrants, several airport workers, and a teacher and a student who had been part of the four-month struggle against further privatization of public education.

“Athens is very much part of the imperialist world discussed in these books,” said Georges Mehrabian, who presented the titles on behalf of Diethnes Vima. “And, the transformation of the U.S. military discussed in ‘Their Transformation and Ours’ is on the agenda here too as Athens seeks to modernize its armed forces into units of rapid deployment for use in the Balkans and in the Middle East in order to ensure its share of plunder. Greek troops are stationed in both regions.”

As the document points out about the working class in the United States, “there is also a transformation of our class here in Greece, with its own rhythm and peculiarities,” he said. “Over 1 million immigrants now work here out of a population of 11 million. Women are massively part of the work force. These developments strengthen our ability to resist the bosses’ offensive. Who would have expected the tenacity of the four-month resistance, first by school teachers and then the university students? Who would have expected the rebellion and occupations in close to a dozen of the country’s prisons last week? This was a fight about simple human dignity by workers behind bars.”

According to the Athens daily *Kathimeriní*, overcrowding in Greek prisons has reduced cell space to 0.7 square meters per prisoner (1 square meter = 1.2 square yards). European Union guidelines require 7 square meters. Half the prison population is immigrants. Greece has the largest per capita prison population in the European Union.

On May Day, at a rally of some 10,000 trade unionists, a large literature table staffed by five volunteers sold three copies of each of the two titles. A total of 22 books on revolutionary working-class politics were sold. Volunteers will be fielding sales teams to bookstores in Cyprus, northern Greece, and Athens in June.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Rail maintenance workers strike in Canada

Militant/John Steele

TORONTO, May 18—About 3,200 track maintenance workers, members of the Teamsters union, struck Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) across Canada May 16. Pickets, like the one pictured above outside the CPR Intermodal services yard here, slowed the movement of containers filled with imported consumer goods. “They’re trying to break us,” Bill Poirier, a Teamsters Canada health and safety official, told the *Militant* yesterday. Poirier said the bosses were trying to hold down wages and conditions for the track maintenance workers in preparation for upcoming negotiations with locomotive engineers and other CPR workers. He reported that 82 percent of the workers who voted supported strike action. The union is demanding a wage increase of 13.5 percent over three years, improvements to car mileage allowances, and better clothing, boot, and tool subsidies. CPR has assigned 1,300 managers to replace the striking workers and has reportedly applied for a court injunction to stop all picketing.

—JOHN STEELE

U.S. rulers wrangle over new immigration ‘reform’ bill

Continued from front page

and employers who break the law.”

Speaking at the press conference, Homeland Security chief Michael Chertoff applauded the measure as “strong on the border, tough on enforcement in the interior.”

The 380-page document stipulates that the U.S. government must first add 6,000 additional Border Patrol cops, build hundreds of miles of fences and vehicle barriers on the U.S.-Mexico border, expand surveillance with radar towers and aerial drones, add at least 20 more federal immigration jails (including the use of former military bases), and strengthen sanctions for employers hiring undocumented immigrants. It also requires the establishment of a “high-tech worker identification” system to register all newly hired workers, immigrants and U.S. citizens alike.

Until these “triggers” are in place, a process that according to U.S. officials could take at least 18 months, undocumented immigrants who applied for legal status would be allowed to work on a “probationary” basis. Then they would apply for a four-year, renewable “Z visa,” paying fines and fees of at least $4,500 for a family of four.

After eight years, those with Z visas could apply for permanent resident status. They would be required to pay an additional $4,000 fine, show they spoke English, remain employed, and pass a background check. They would have to leave the United States and apply from their home country.

The application would be judged on a “merit” point system based on skills, formal education levels, and job experience, giving less weight to family ties than current laws. Spouses and minor children could apply for a green card but adult children and brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens would have to qualify under the more restrictive point system. Visas for parents would be limited to 40,000 a year. Proponents of the bill argue that this provision will “end chain migration.”

The bill provides for a pool of 600,000 “guest workers” to be brought in for up to three two-year stints to meet the labor needs of U.S. bosses in areas such as construction, meatpacking, and landscaping. The workers would be required to leave the United States for a year between each stay. The guest worker visa would not put them automatically on the road to a green card. Nor could they bring their families.

The new bill combines elements of the previous White House–backed proposal and the bipartisan STRIVE (Flake-Gutiérrez) Act. While the Bush administration and prominent Republicans support it, some conservative senators have dismissed it as an “amnesty.” Liberal politicians are wringing their hands over the bill’s onerous restrictions on immigrants, while calling for its passage as the “best possible” deal.

Business groups have balked at provisions in the bill that affect them. “The point system would be skewed in favor of more highly skilled and educated workers,” Laura Foote Reiff, a spokesperson for a group of hotel, restaurant, nursing home, hospital, and construction businesses, told the *New York Times.*

Some bosses object to the burden that the worker ID program would place on them. Other employers want to keep a system that gives them more of a say in sponsoring workers, not a government-devised “merit” system.

Democratic and Republican politicians have announced plans to introduce competing amendments such as limits on the guest worker program. Other business groups want the temporary worker plan and object to hurdles for “employers who need a stable, reliable work force,” as Senate majority leader Harry Reid put it.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

June 4, 1982

The streets of Tehran broke into celebration May 24 as news arrived that Iranian troops had liberated the city of Khorramshahr in Khuzestan province. This was the last major stronghold of Iraqi troops in the war against Iran.

Upon hearing the news, Iranians rushed to stores to buy candy and cookies as gifts for friends celebrating the victory. Dancing began in the streets. Drivers turned on their car lights and beeped their horns.

The celebration was especially big in south Tehran, the working-class area of the city. Many of the soldiers killed in the war had come from south Tehran.

June 3, 1957

The burning resentment of the people of Taiwan (Formosa) against U.S. imperialism and its brutal puppet regime of Chiang Kai-shek erupted, May 24, into mass demonstrations in the island’s capital city of Taipei. About 30,000 persons besieged the Nationalist police headquarters in Taipei for six hours before being dispersed by the arrival of troops and the declaration of martial law in the city.

The angry crowd was demanding release of prisoners taken earlier the same day in demonstrations which wrecked the U.S. Embassy and the offices of the U.S. Information Service, and which besieged the U.S. military communications center.

June 11, 1932

The Dies anti-alien bill, the most vicious piece of anti-working class legislation in years, has just been passed by the House of Representatives. That the Senate will act in harmony with their congressional brothers is a foregone conclusion … if not enough working class pressure is brought to bear on the case.

The purpose of the bill is to deport all those workers who have found their way to Communism. The first workers to be affected will be those belonging to the Communist party.

This is a fight for the elementary rights of the workers, native and foreign, to organize and join any party they see fit.

Harry Ring: A communist militant for seve

New York and Los Angeles meetings celebrate life and political contributions of Socialist

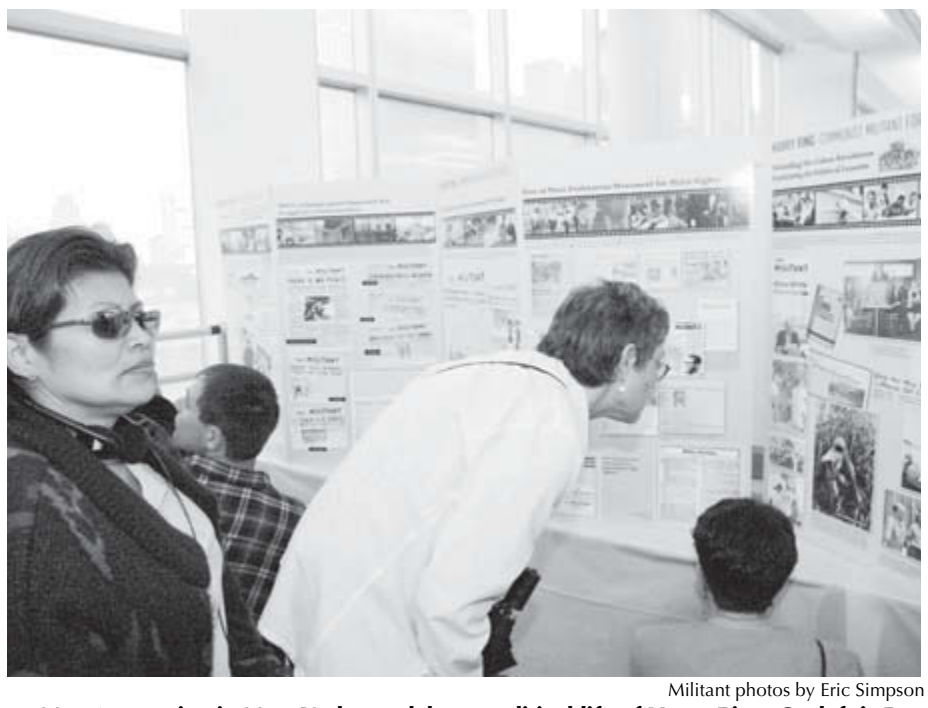
NEW YORK

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON AND REBECCA WILLIAMSON

NEW YORK—About 250 people attended a meeting here May 19 to celebrate the life and political contributions of Harry Ring. A 71-year cadre and leader of the Socialist Workers Party, Ring died April 17 in Los Angeles at age 89.

Those present included SWP members and supporters, many of whom had worked with Ring, Young Socialists, and workers and youth new to the communist movement. People came from Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the eastern United States. A separate meeting was held in Los Angeles the same afternoon (see article on facing page).

A display depicting Ring's decades of unbroken political activity attracted much attention during a reception before the program. The presentations were followed by dinner and dancing.



Militant photos by Eric Simpson

Left: SWP national secretary Jack Barnes speaks at May 19 meeting in New York to celebrate political life of Harry Ring. On left is Ben O'Shaughnessy, organizer of Young Socialists National Steering Committee, who also spoke. Right: Audience members view display.

How he became a political leader

SWP national secretary Jack Barnes was the featured speaker. He described how Ring became a political leader. "The struggles Harry went through in the 1930s made him the man he was," he said.

Coming from a working-class family, Ring had few options when he graduated from high school in Newark, New Jersey, in 1936. He joined the Workers Alliance of America, which was fighting for the rights of the unemployed, like himself, and campaigning against racism, bigotry, and fascism. It was a militant group bringing together Blacks, Jews, Italian immigrants, and others.

During that time Frank Hague was mayor of nearby Jersey City. Having begun his career in the Hudson County sheriff's office, Hague, a Democrat, turned to fascist methods to prevent union organizing. Combining political pressure with ultrapatriotic, anticommunist demagogy, Hague mobilized cops and goon squads to break up political meetings and to attack Blacks and Jews. In 1938, Jersey City cops attacked a meeting featuring Socialist Party (SP) leader Norman Thomas, brutally beating dozens and driving Thomas and 15 others out of the city.

As an SP member, Ring was involved in efforts by workers to physically defend their right to hold political meetings and to prevent attacks on homes of Jewish and other working-class families.

Soon after graduating from high school, Ring joined the Young Peoples' Socialist League (YPSL), the SP's youth group. As such he was automatically an SP member. Ring was recruited to YPSL's left wing, the *Socialist Appeal* caucus, which was made up of communist cadres who had joined the SP in 1936 to take advantage of recruitment opportunities among youth and workers in the party's radicalizing left wing. In 1938, Ring was among those in the SP's left wing who took part in founding the Socialist Workers Party. He served on the SWP's National Committee from 1954 to 1981.

Ring developed in those early years his clear, forceful voice he is known for, Barnes said. It was out of necessity. Young workers had to be able to speak at street corners at the time, when sound equipment was hard to find. They had to be heard and be able to hold their own against hecklers.

"Harry wasn't an educated socialist to begin with," Barnes said. He went through direct, personal experiences of the kind necessary to become a communist. "Harry knew what capitalism will do in a crisis. He understood that we have no choice over whether there will be a bloody civil war in this country. He knew working men and women will fight to defend themselves. He learned that in the 1930s—one of the hardest things to learn in the United States today."

A party man

"Harry was totally convinced that to be a fully rounded class-struggle militant, it was necessary to do what he did—become an active, loyal, and disciplined cadre of a communist party," said Alan Harris, a veteran leader of the Communist League in the United Kingdom, in a message read at the meeting.

It was one of more than 50 messages to the New York and Los Angeles events. Greetings came from Australia, Canada, Cuba, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. *Militant* editor Argiris Malapanis, who cochaired the program with Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the *New International* magazine, announced all the messages would be sent to Priscilla March, Ring's lifelong comrade and companion.

Barnes explained how under the pressures of the U.S. build-up toward entry into World War II and the signing of the Stalin-Hitler pact in 1939, a petty-bourgeois current within the SWP rejected the theoretical foundations, political principles, and organizational methods of the proletarian party. Ring, convinced of the party's program, fought as part of the proletarian majority for the future of the party—a fight that resulted in a split.

Then in the early 1950s, under the pressures of the antilabor and anticommunist witch hunt, a group of trade unionists within the SWP began to argue that under conditions of capitalist prosperity it was futile to build a revolutionary party. Ring played an important role during that struggle in New York, arguing his conviction that it is necessary to build a proletarian party.

Within a few years, world events affirmed the correctness of that course. The mass working-class movement for Black freedom that eventually smashed Jim Crow segregation exploded in the United States. The revelations by then Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev about some of the crimes of Stalin's regime and a revolution in Hungary showed the beginnings of the inevitable breakup of the Stalinist apparatuses in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 brought new revolutionary forces to the world stage. Ring spent three months in Cuba in 1960 as a *Militant* reporter.

Revolutionary journalism

Ring joined the *Militant* staff in 1952. He spent the rest of his life writing for and contributing to the paper, and served on its staff until 1989. His 1965 interview on WBAI radio with Malcolm X is printed in the Pathfinder pamphlet *Two Speeches by Malcolm X*. In 1968 he launched the "Great Society," a *Militant* column that succinctly and wryly captured the injustices of class society, and wrote it until just before his death. His last byline appeared in the April 2 issue.

Arthur Hughes, a *Militant* copy editor from 1982 to 1990, spoke about how Ring valued "straight journalistic practices" for the socialist press. "In staff meetings, he would point to photos, headlines, and leads, posing the questions, 'Do they catch the reader's interest, draw them in, encourage them to go further?'

"Harry was always conscious to encourage new writers," said Hughes. He was never condescending . "He always advised comrades new to writing, 'In your everyday life as a communist, keep your eye out for what could make a tight little article for the paper.'"

In 1971, in response to rising struggles by Mexican immigrants and the growing movement for Chicano liberation, the

Continued on page 7

Militant/Dave Wulp

Harry Ring (left) at 1965 socialist summer school in Chicago with Dick McBride and Mareen Jasinski.

Further reading from Pathfinder

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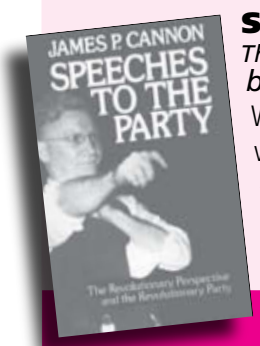

Speeches to the Party
The Revolutionary Perspective and the Revolutionary Party
by James P. Cannon
Writing in the early 1950s, Cannon discusses how class-conscious workers, in face of the conservatizing pressures of the emerging capitalist expansion and anticommunist witch hunt, carried out effective union work and political activity to build a communist workers party. $24

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en decades

t Workers Party leader

LOS ANGELES

BY NAOMI CRAINE

LOS ANGELES—A well-attended meeting here on May 19 celebrated the life and seven decades of political contributions of Harry Ring, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Ring, who died here April 17, was active in Los Angeles building the communist movement both during the 1970s and over the past 17 years.

A similar event was held the same day in New York (see facing page).

The meeting took place two days after a march and rally of 5,000 protesting the police riot against a May Day demonstration here for immigrant rights.

"Harry's whole political life prepared him to embrace and join these working-class mobilizations," said James Harris, organizer of the Los Angeles SWP branch who cochaired the program. Ring, he noted, enthusiastically participated, supported, and reported for the *Militant* on such actions over the years.

About 120 people attended the West Coast celebration, hailing from Washington, Arizona, Utah, Hawaii, and California. Before and after the program, they studied displays, looked through a book of messages sent to the meetings, and enjoyed a spread of food.

Elizabeth Stone, editor of *Women and the Cuban Revolution* and longtime SWP cadre, described how she met Harry Ring in 1961. "I was immediately struck by his knowledge of the Cuban Revolution," she said. In l960 Ring visited Cuba and witnessed the mass mobilizations there that led to the establishment of a workers state, "when hundreds of thousands were involved in what they called 'interventions,' taking over U.S.-owned factories, sugar mills, mines, and hotels."

Miguel Pendás, who wrote the pamphlet *Chicano Liberation and Socialism*, highlighted some of his experiences on the *Militant*'s Southwest Bureau, which Ring organized from 1971 to 1979. The bureau was set up after the August 1970 police riot against the National Chicano Moratorium, in which Chicano journalist Rubén Salazar was killed and numerous people were injured and arrested.

Through the bureau, Ring organized young cadres of the socialist movement to write about the fights they were involved in, making the *Militant* a voice of the struggle. "Chicano activists were hungry for news, and we were among the few writing about these activities," Pendás noted.

Pendás recalled driving thousands of miles to cover struggles from the agricultural valleys of California to Crystal City, Texas. "We learned to get up at 3:00 a.m. like the farm workers so we could see how the morning picket lines would go, before it got too hot."

Meeting co-chair Joel Britton, who collaborated with Ring while editing the *Militant* during the early years of the Southwest Bureau, read messages to the meeting from José Angel Gutiérrez, a leader in the 1970s of the Raza Unida Party in Texas, and from Miguel Angel and Frobén Lozada, leaders of the fight for an Ethnic Studies program at Meritt College in Oakland.

Steve Penner, a Vancouver-based volunteer in Pathfinder's international Print Project, also addressed the meeting. He explained how in the 1970s and ' 80s the leadership of what is now the Communist League in Canada, of which he was part, welcomed the SWP leadership's collaboration in the building of a communist party that was rooted in the industrial working class, and was responsive to the unfolding revolutions in Nicaragua and Grenada at that time. "Comrades like Harry were a living link to our international movement's continuity with the Communist International that came out of the Russian Revolution," he said.

Michael Ortega, organizer of the Young Socialists in Los Angeles, met Ring as a student in last year's socialist summer school here. "Harry put a big emphasis on education," Ortega said. "Young Socialists owe him quite a bit for his efforts to have *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* published as a pamphlet. This is among the top weapons we use today in classes for new members and with young people becoming interested in the movement."

Norton Sandler, a member of the SWP National Committee, described the struggles that forged Ring as a communist. Sandler noted that Ring carried national leadership responsibilities for 35 of his 71 years in the party.

A special Harry Ring Party Building Appeal raised $5,500 to help build the party to which Ring dedicated his life.

Clockwise from top: Family of protesters on steps of State House in Trenton, New Jersey, in April 1936 occupation by unemployed workers calling themselves the "Army of Unoccupation." Fascist goons backing Jersey City mayor Frank Hague break up June 4, 1938, Newark rally addressed by Socialist Party leader Norman Thomas; as thugs pelted Thomas with rotten eggs and tomatoes, cops moved in to disperse rally. SWP candidates for U.S. Congress, State Senate, and State Assembly in 1936 in New Jersey (from left) Ruben Plaskett, Frank Shapiro, and Willis Crews campaigned to oppose Hague's political machine.

Militant/Lisa Rottach

Miguel Pendás speaks at May 19 meeting in Los Angeles to honor Harry Ring. Other speakers are, from left, Steve Penner, Michael Ortega, and Norton Sandler.

NEW YORK EVENT

Continued from page 6

Militant established a Southwest bureau based in Los Angeles. Ring was its chief until 1979, when the bureau was closed.

Olga Rodríguez, editor of *Politics of Chicano Liberation,* worked with Ring when she was a leader of the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance in the southwest at the time. "As a leader of the party and a communist journalist who gave voice to the movement, Harry, along with the systematic work of our branches in the fight of the Chicano people, helped the party win deep respect which stands us in good stead for the battles of our class unfolding today," she told the meeting.

Training newer generations

Ring was editor of the *Militant* when Mary-Alice Waters joined the paper's staff in 1968. She said he agreed to edit the paper only on the condition that he could train his replacement. Waters became editor the next year.

In 1968, the world was opening up in new ways for revolutionaries, she noted. An upsurge by students and workers in France in May and June of that year; the continued resistance by Vietnamese working people to U.S. imperialism's brutal assault on their country, and the related development of the antiwar movement here; and the beginnings of a movement for women's emancipation, among other political developments, were bringing new layers of young people into the party's ranks.

During that period Ring contributed to this growth in part by taking leadership responsibility for the party's work in the anti–Vietnam War movement.

When the SWP made a turn to the industrial unions at the end of the 1970s, Ring's intransigent support for the move had a deep impact on many of his generation.

"Harry contributed to the development of many generations," said Ben O'Shaughnessy, organizer of the Young Socialists National Steering Committee.

O'Shaughnessy explained how in the fall of 2005 supporters of the *Militant* sold more than twice their original goal in the paper's subscription campaign. Ring pointed to the jump in circulation in his Jan. 23, 2006, "Great Society" column and asked, "Doesn't this call for an effort to win many to renew their subscriptions and to recruit to the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists?"

"Many young people, including several in this room, joined the communist movement through those experiences," said O'Shaughnessy.

"Young people always felt they could relate to Harry," said Waters. "But it wasn't a special way of treating young people. It was his political respect for working people—their ideas, their struggles, and how they were capable of transforming themselves and society."

Many messages pointed to Ring's hospitality and joy of life, she noted.

Ring had the qualities of discipline, honor, and respect. Known for his irreverent sense of humor, he never made jokes to attack individuals, Barnes said. "He despised people like Don Imus," the talk-show host recently fired by CBS Radio for racist and sexist remarks he made on air. "But above all Harry had courage. Courage to do the right thing for 71 years."

"It's important that he was focused on getting people involved," Loretta VanPelt, 27, a temporary worker and graduate student from Minneapolis who attended the meeting, told the *Militant*. "Whether writing for the *Militant* or contributing in other ways."

"His life was focused on one thing—building the revolutionary movement," said Gabriel García, 41, a furniture worker in New York. "And he treated that seriously, but with humor. It is an individual example of the many people who dedicate their lives to building the SWP."

A collection at the meeting for the Harry Ring Party Building Appeal brought in more than $10,000.

Minneapolis ICE raid

Continued from front page
gathered at the intersection where the cops showed up. Others held signs around the corner telling people a raid was in progress. Many brought camcorders and digital cameras to record the treatment of those arrested.

When the cops escorted one man from a building in handcuffs, protesters began chanting, *"Fuera, ICE! Fuera, ICE!"* or "Go away, ICE!" One protester holding a sign that read "Shame on You" was arrested by Minneapolis cops for refusing to leave the sidewalk.

"I want to know what's going to happen to these families, what's going to happen to the kids left behind," Jesús Ramírez shouted in the face of an ICE agent who stood silent.

According to the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, the raid began about 10:30 a.m., when half a dozen police vehicles appeared in the parking lot of St. Paul's Lutheran Church while another six appeared outside the Powderhorn Park Baptist Church.

Rev. Patrick Cabello Hansel, pastor at St. Paul's, asked the agents to leave, but they refused. "The church is supposed to be a sanctuary from raids like this," Cabello said. "This is a violation of the separation of church and state."

According to local television news, ICE officials alleged they arrested and indicted 23 people on charges related to running a prostitution ring. Police and city officials sought to defuse anger against the immigration raids that has become widespread since an April 14 sweep of homes and businesses in Willmar, Minnesota, where *la migra* grabbed about 50 undocumented workers. "No matter what people's perspectives are on immigration issues, that is such a repugnant crime that I hope it would draw together everyone in the community to speak out," police spokeswoman Amelia Huffman told the press.

Militant/Julian Santana

About 100 people turned out May 20 at the site of an immigration raid in a residential Minneapolis neighborhood to protest the roundup by federal and local cops.

On the evening of the May 19 raid, some 35 people met at a local community center to discuss what had happened that day and how to fight for immigrant rights. "We need to come back and protest against this," said Rosie Cruz, a local community activist.

Democrats drop Iraq withdrawal dates from bill

Continued from front page
that contained such dates.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Democrat from Maryland, said Congress might work through the weekend to pass a bill that Bush could sign by Memorial Day.

"We don't have a veto-proof Congress," said Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Democrat from Nevada.

"The president has made it very clear that he is not going to sign timelines," said Hoyer.

To keep up the Democrats' "anti-war" façade, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said she is unlikely to vote for the bill.

The bill provides the administration with funding for the wars but includes a range of "benchmarks" that the Iraqi government should meet to continue receiving U.S. reconstruction aid.

At the same time, the bill authorizes the president to spend the funds regardless of whether Baghdad meets the benchmarks.

In Iraq, U.S. and Iraqi government troops are preparing to push deeper into Sadr City, a largely Shiite working-class section of Baghdad, to keep up pressure on Muqtada al-Sadr's militia. Sadr's forces, which hold 30 seats in the Iraqi parliament, have been a primary target of the U.S.-led crackdown in Baghdad targeting militias linked to Shiite and Sunni capitalists competing for control of Iraq's resources.

The U.S. military is involved in negotiations to clear the way for a gradual push into Sadr City in coming weeks, reported the May 22 *Washington Post*. But if political options are exhausted the Pentagon has alternate plans, including a possible frontal assault.

According to the *Post*, the U.S. military has in place a "second Fallujah plan," which it is not prepared to use now. This is referring to the massive U.S. ground and air assault in 2004 on supporters of Saddam Hussein's Baath party in the largely Sunni Anbar province.

Massachusetts leather workers sue boss

Continued from front page
plant March 6 and arrested 361 workers for alleged immigration violations. The workers hail from Brazil, Cape Verde, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Portugal.

The suit charges the bosses with setting up a fake company, Front Line Defense, to avoid paying time-and-a-half for overtime shifts.

At a May 15 press conference here announcing the suit, Audrey Richardson of Greater Boston Legal Services, which filed the suit on behalf of the workers, said many Bianco employees worked double shifts—80 hours per week—for straight-time pay.

"I worked two shifts," Flor Chach told the press. "I started at 7:30 in the morning and worked until 5:00 in the afternoon, then I started my second shift at 5:15 and finished at 11:15 at night.

"And I was paid with two different checks," she continued. "In the day shift I was paid with a check in the name of Michael Bianco, and in the evening I was paid with Front Line." Chach, 23, worked for Michael Bianco from August 2005 until March 2007.

Attorneys representing the workers explained that Front Line Defense uses the same address as Michael Bianco Inc. and its officers are relatives of Bianco's owner, Francesco Insolia. His wife, Suzanne Thompson, is Front Line's president, and she and the owner's daughter, Marguerite Insolia, are its directors.

The lawsuit seeks back wages for all current and former workers, about 500 in all, including those arrested in the recent ICE raid. "Even those who have been deported are due back wages because fair wage laws do not distinguish between legal and illegal workers," Richardson said.

The day after the March 6 raid, 60 workers were released on "humanitarian" grounds due to pressure from relatives and others in the community. On March 17, some 700 people rallied at Bedford high school to demand release of the detained workers.

Aníbal Lucas, director of Organización Maya K'iché, a Guatemalan cultural group here that has been organizing support for the Bianco workers, said that as of now about 150 of the arrested workers have been released. But 200 remain in jail in Texas, since a federal judge denied a motion that they be returned to Massachusetts, where their legal help, families, and social support network are based.

According to the *Boston Globe,* Michael Bianco is still in business, has hired 150 workers since the raid, and is continuing the make backpacks for the military.

"Help is still very much needed for families who have a parent in jail, and also those who are released, but cannot go back to work," said Lucas. "Expenses mount up for food, rent, transportation to legal hearings, and more." Contributions, he said, can be sent to The Michael Bianco Disaster Fund, c/o Sovereign Bank, 1 Sovereign Place, New Bedford, MA 02746.

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EDITORIAL

Oppose new immigration 'reform' bill!

Working people should oppose the new immigration bill introduced in the Senate. Like earlier proposals, it serves the interests of the bosses. While offering legal status to some under heavy restrictions, it is designed to keep millions as outlaws to maintain a permanent pool of superexploited labor—as the leather workers in New Bedford, Massachusetts, have graphically exposed through their lawsuit.

The bill calls for thousands more immigration cops and new jails. Workers would pay extortionate fees and remain in limbo for years, dependent on bosses for their status. Family reunification would be restricted. The "guest worker" plan would assure bosses a stable supply of workers paid minimal wages, denied benefits, and stripped of their rights and mobility.

This measure is designed to increase competition for jobs, drive down wages for all, and promote the false argument that immigrants—not the capitalists and their profit system—are responsible for unemployment and declining living standards.

The bill would establish a national ID card with a database of photos and other "biometric" information, such as fingerprints, on *all* newly hired workers. The bosses and their political police will eventually use such an ID to victimize worker militants.

The only effective response to these divide-and-rule tactics is to demand permanent residence for all undocumented immigrants now, with no strings attached, and an end to immigration raids and deportations. The labor movement must champion these demands and organize workers into unions regardless of their legal status.

The integration of millions of immigrants into the permanent proletariat of the United States has contributed to the emergence of a mass political vanguard of the working class. That vanguard is resisting the attacks of the bosses and their government, gaining confidence and experience as it combines struggles for labor demands with broader political fights. This is developing despite setbacks and standoffs the trade unions and working class continue to suffer on the whole.

This kind of resistance is the reason behind the crisis the U.S. rulers face over immigration reform. They had a much easier time agreeing on how to "end welfare as we know it" in the 1990s than writing a bipartisan immigration bill they can pass now. This is a more intractable problem for Washington than foreign policy questions like the Iraq war, where they have more options for maneuver and redeployment. The millions of foreign-born already in the U.S. working class, and the constant flow across the border, are a permanent feature of the U.S. class struggle. No matter what the capitalists do, they draw these workers more into politics.

All working people have a vital stake in this battle. Let's join with those standing up to the police thugs and demand: Unconditional legalization for all now! Stop the raids and deportations! Prosecute the cops for their assaults!

No to Swedish membership in NATO!

Following are excerpts of a statement on the Swedish government's decision to join the NATO Response Force issued May 9 by the Communist League and Young Socialists in Sweden.

No to Swedish membership in NATO and the NATO Response Force! Swedish troops out of Afghanistan, Kosova, Lebanon, the Congo!

On April 15 the governments of Sweden and Finland announced their intention to join the NATO Response Force (NRF) within the year. NRF is a rapid deployment force of 25,000 troops.

From May 14 to 24 NATO is organizing through the NRF the biggest military exercise held in the Baltic Sea since the end of the Cold War.…The Swedish navy is participating….

The Swedish Armed Forces are right now recruiting personnel to the Nordic Battle Group, a 2,600-man-strong Eropean Union force, set up to be able to intervene militarily within 10 days if so decided….

The Swedish Armed Forces are today participating in the war and occupation of Afghanistan with 330 soldiers, a number that will increase. Sweden is also part of NATO's operation in Kosova (460 soldiers) and has declared its willingness and intention to be part of a military intervention in Sudan (Darfur), the third largest oil producer in Africa.

The ruling class in Sweden is in the midst of a deepgoing shift in its foreign policy. The previous social democratic government initiated this shift, and there is bipartisan agreement on it. The shift is driven by a deepening capitalist crisis and a changed world political situation. The previous "third road policy," which meant standing outside military alliances, that served Swedish imperialism so well for many decades, is no longer any good. Now military muscle must also be shown and used. Urban Ahlin, ex-chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee in Parliament, expressed it clearly when he motivated the need for Sweden to assume responsibility for the Nordic Battle Group: "If there is a crisis and the EU must intervene, every country will be called on. Those who don't have their hand in the air will be considered lightweight in all other fields as well."

The military stranglehold against Russia is being tightened….The imperialists know they must crush the resistance of the workers and restore capitalism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to have a chance to solve their crisis….

The way forward is neither to dream of the old days of "neutrality" nor to line up behind the increased militarization of Swedish imperialism in the hope that "we" then will be strong. Working people in Sweden and the world instead need to build a political leadership that can lead forward along an independent political course in solidarity with each other with the aim of taking power from the ruling capitalist families. A course that Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and the 26 July Movement took in the 1950s and that the Cuban leadership still sticks to.

No to the imperialist encirclement of Russia!

Not one woman, not one man, not one cent to the imperialist armed forces!

LETTERS

Is China a workers state?

In the Dec. 25, 2006, *Militant*, China is peculiarly labeled a workers state. As explained superbly, the word profit is misleading because the economic apparatus of China is different from that of the capitalist: "The majority of basic industry inside China today is state-owned" and rather than capitalists appropriating the surplus value, that surplus value "goes to the state" where it's "apportioned by the ruling bureaucracy."

Indubitably, the *Militant* understands a requisite in the construction of socialist society is that economy and public policy must be subordinated to the control of the masses. Without this, socialism is not; communism will never be.

"The bureaucratic ruling caste is motivated by the maintenance, and … expansion, of its privileged position in society," the December 25 article says. In a world ripe for socialism, the Chinese bureaucracy "is not historically necessary."

The Chinese bureaucracy has no interest in socialism. It will never hesitate to resort to "repressive measures" as needed, and further politically alienate those it exploits, especially when the exploited protrude their sights from their own domination to their own emancipation. In regard to the latter, such "socialist consciousness" of the masses, which once challenged the bureaucracy, does not exist anymore as stated in the Dec. 18, 2006, issue.

How then can they be graciously called a workers state?

Christopher Preciado
San Antonio, Texas

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

China: A deformed workers state

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

Reader Christopher Preciado writes that because the Chinese government is repressive and the ruling bureaucracy is not socialist, China cannot be called a workers state.

He refers to "Reply to a reader" columns in the December 18 and December 25 issues that describe why China and the former Soviet republics are workers states. Preciado agrees with the explanation that China is not a capitalist state. He is also correct in saying that the government in Beijing resorts to brutal repression against working people as in the suppression of the youth rebellion in Tiananmen Square in 1989 or the assault on Uighur Muslims in Gulja in 1997.

REPLY TO A READER

The December 18 column noted that the foundations of a workers state are state property, a monopoly on foreign trade, and economic planning, established through the expropriation of the capitalist class by workers and farmers. It is not simply a category of "nationalized property" but a set of social relations conquered by the working class in its struggle for power.

The state is not the same as the government. States are rooted in the rule of one historic class or another—in the modern epoch, either the bourgeoisie or the working class. Governments can take different forms. For example, a capitalist state can have a bourgeois democratic government or a military dictatorship. A workers state can have a revolutionary government—like the Soviet Union in Lenin's time, or Cuba today—or a bureaucratic regime, like the Soviet Union after the late 1920s or China today. A good explanation of the nature of a workers state—including a bureaucratically deformed one like that in China—can be found in Leon Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*.

In that book, in the article "On the nature of the Soviet Union," Trotsky makes an analogy between a workers state and a trade union. A trade union is a workers' organization despite the class-collaborationist course of the bureaucratic misleadership, which weakens the organization. Workers defend their union against attacks by the bosses and scabs. Under pressure from the ranks, the union tops are compelled to take some progressive steps. Likewise, China is a workers state despite the reactionary policies of the ruling bureaucratic caste—which saps the working class—and working people should defend China against imperialist attack.

The Chinese government is not revolutionary. Its leadership has been Stalinist from the beginning. But the privileged caste that dominates the government and Communist Party is not an exploiting class like the bourgeoisie that was overthrown in the 1949 revolution. It is a parasitic middle-class layer that siphons off resources and clamps down on working people in order to protect its privileged position.

Because of the historic strength and expectations of Chinese workers and peasants—a result of the revolution there—the government in Beijing is compelled to defend the basic nationalized property relations. It would take a bloody counterrevolution to overthrow the workers state, and the bureaucracy is too weak to do this. That is why the imperialist powers are hostile to China—not to the bureaucracy, but to the workers and peasants, who remain the main obstacle to reimposing capitalism there.

Describing China accurately, as a deformed workers state further degenerating today under the misleadership of a bureaucratic regime, is not about semantics. It has to do with a working-class approach, in practice, toward China, its government, and Beijing's conflict with Washington and other imperialist powers.

For Further Reading

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